

KIDNAPED

By George Elmer Cobb.

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"It's a rather forlorn proposition," remarked Biggs, the only lawyer in the frontier town of Sierra.

"I have already taken that view of the case," responded Maurice Allen in a rather gloomy tone.

"Too bad you wasted the time and money coming way out here. If you



"Won't you first let me deliver a letter I have for you?"

"I have four thousand dollars cash you can fix it up."

"I have scarcely four thousand dollars," replied Maurice definitely. "Still, I am not sorry that I came," he added to himself, and he thought brought a brighter attitude to his face.

"You see," explained the lawyer, "the Triumph mine is penalized for two thousand five hundred dollars. Then there are some outside claims

against it. There is still an equity of redemption, but it runs for only thirty days."

"I cannot raise the money," declared Maurice. "Miss Dale, as you know, has no means. We will have to let the property go by default."

As Maurice left the attorney's office and rather gloomily walked along streets of the primitive mining settlements he had a deal to occupy his thoughts. His father had died in the East a few months previous, leaving barely enough to pay his debts. Only one possible asset was discovered—a half interest in the Triumph mine at Sierra. His partner in that enterprise had been Samuel Dale.

Maurice had come west to see if there was anything tangible to the proposition. It was to find Samuel Dale dead and his daughter Vinnie teaching the one school in the district.

He found her as helpless as himself in the way of finances. He marvels to discover this educated girl, the graduate of a high-class eastern college, among such crude environment. In fact she and himself were about the only persons in the settlement of any refinement and culture.

He was interested in her the moment he met her, and her sad story won his deepest sympathy and regard.

It appeared that her father was an old friend of the father of Maurice, who had financed the mine. Its value was undeniable, but Mr. Allen had died at a time when more capital was needed, and Mr. Dale broke down under the strain of hard work and worry, and died also. He left a few debts. His daughter had become surety for these and was nobly striving to pay them off before she went to relatives and another school position nearer civilization.

The little township school had just been dismissed as Maurice reached it. Vinnie came out to look up as he approached. She greeted him with her